

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05 /084 W  
-----115676 151349Z /43  
R 150805Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1565  
INFO USMISSION GENEVA

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FOL TEL SENT ACTION IMMEDIATE BANGKOK FROM UDORN DATED MARCH 15,  
1978 REPEATED TO YOU

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE UDORN 0063

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: SREF TH LA  
SUBJECT: A) BANGKOK 7327 (B) UDORN 0059  
(D) UDORN A-1, JUNE 30, 1977  
(D) UDORN A-2, NOVEMBER 1, 1977

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTTEL A CONREP VISITED NONG KHAI  
REFUGEE CAMP MARCH 13 TO DISCUSS CAMP WATER SITUATION  
WITH THAI CAMP OFFICIALS AND REFUGEE REPRESENTATIVES.

2. THAI CAMP COMMANDER, MR LAMDUAN SOWARAPON, ACKNOWLEDGED  
THAT CAMP SUFFERS FROM WATER SHORTAGE. HE EXPLAINED THAT  
ONLY THREE OF FIVE DEEP WATER EWLLS THAT ARE MAIN SOURCE  
OF CAMP'S WATER SUPPLY ARE OPERATING EFFECTIVELY. HE SAID  
THAT OF TWO INOPERATIVE WELLS, ONE SUFFERS FROM FAULTY  
ELECTRIC PUMP THAT HAS GONE UNMREPAIRED FOR TEN MONTHS  
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AND OTHER HAS YET TO HAVE WATER PUMP INSTALLED. HE  
STATED WITH REGARD TO THREE FUNCTIONING WELLS, ONE IS  
MANUAL POWERED WHICH LIMITS ITS OUTPUT.

3. THAI CAMP COMMANDER NOTED THAT EVEN IF ALL FIVE  
WELLS WERE FUNCTIONG PROPERLY, CAMP WOULD STILL LACK  
SUFFICIENT WATER TO MEET BASIC NEEDS OF ITS NEARLY

24,000 INHABITANTS. HE INDICATED THAT NUMBER OF DEEP WATER WELLS SHOULD BE CONSIDERABLY INCREASED.

4. THAI CAMP COMMANDER CLAIMS THAT HE HAS FULLY INFORMED MOI AND UNHCR REGARDING THE CAMP'S WATER PROBLEMS BUT THAT NEITHER ORGANIZATION HAS TAKEN SUFFICIENT CORRECTIVE ACTION.

5. LAO REFUGEE PRESIDENT, EX-FAR MAJOR SANG, AND HMONG REFUGEE DEPUTY LEADER, MR YIA PAO YONG, WERE INTERVIEWED SEPARATELY FOLLOWING DISCUSSION WITH THAI CAMP COMMANDER, AND AGREED THAT CAMP'S PRESENT WELL SYSTEM IS CLEARLY INADEQUATE. LAO REPRESENTATIVE MAJ GENERAL SANG NOTED THAT MOST OF LAO REFUGEES, WHO MAKE UP 70 PERCENT OF CAMP'S POPULATION, MUST PURCHASE THEIR POTABLE WATER FROM LOCAL THAI VENDORS.

6. COMMENT: AN ADDITIONAL FACTOR TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION WHEN REVIEWING NONG KHAI CAMP WATER PROBLEM IS CURRENT DROUGHT WHICH HAS DEPRIVED CAMP OF RAINFALL AS ADDITIONAL WATER SOURCE AND MAY HAVE ALSO LOWERED WATER TABLE SOMEWHAT IN CAMP AREA. IF RAINS RESUME AS THEY ARE SUPPOSED TO IN LATE MAY, WATER SITUATION IN CAMP SHOULD IMPROVE SOMEWHAT.

7. WITH REGARD TO STEPS THAT MIGHT BE TAKEN TO IMPROVE NONG KHAI WATER SHORTAGE, WE RECOMMEND THAT FIRST PRIORITY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE GIVEN TO INSURE THAT ALL FIVE EXISTING DEEP WATER WELLS IN CAMP ARE FUNCTIONING AT PEAK CAPACITY. THIS WILL REQUIRE REPAIR OF ONE WELL PUMP AND INSTALLATION OF ONE, POSSIBLY TWO, NEW PUMPS. COST OF INSTALLATION OF NEW PUMPS IS ESTIMATED BY CAMP OFFICIALS TO BE US\$ 3000-4000 EACH.

8. BOTH CAMP OFFICIALS AND REFUGEE REPRESENTATIVES POINT OUT THAT TYPE OF ELECTRIC PUMPS NOW IN USE ARE UNSATISFACTORY BECAUSE THEY BREAK DOWN OFTEN AND ARE DIFFICULT TO REPAIR SINCE THEY ARE BURIED DEEP IN GROUND. THEY RECOMMEND THAT NEW PUMPS BE ENGINE OPERATED AND INSTALLED ABOVE GROUND.

9. WE SUGGEST THAT SECOND PRIORITY BE TO CONDUCT SURVEY OF ACTUAL WATER NEEDS OF CAMP, WHICH HAS NOW ATTAINED POPULATION LEVEL OF SMALL CITY, TO SERVE AS RATIONAL BASIS FOR EXPANSION OF NUMBER OF DEEP WELLS. IT IS ASSUMED THAT WATER TABLE AT NONG KHAI WOULD SUPPORT DIGGING OF NEW WELLS.

10. UNHCR SEEMS MOST LOGICAL ORGANIZATION TO UNDERTAKE

THESE IMPROVEMENTS SINCE IT PRESUMABLY HAS BUDGETED FUNDS FOR CAMP MAINTAINENCE. US VOLAGS ARE ANOTHER POSSIBLE SOURCE OF ASSISTANCE TO HELP IMPROVE NONG KHAI'S WATER PROBLEM.

11. EMBASSY BANGKOK COULD PERFORM USEFUL SERVICE BY BRINGING CONSTRUCTIVE PRESSURE TO BEAR ON UNHCR TO UNDERTAKE IMMEDIATE, PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS REMEDYING PROBLEM. AS A MANIFESTATION OF OUR INTEREST IN THIS ISSUE, EMBASSY BANGKOK MIGHT ALSO CONSIDER CONTRIBUTION OF FUNDS OR SERVICES OF TECHNICIANS TO HELP WITH IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING WELLS OR SURVEY FOR CONSTRUCTION OF NEW WELLS.

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12. AS FINAL OBSERVATION, WE WOULD NOTE COMMENT OF US VOLAG REPRESENTATIVE KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT NONG KHAI CAMP CONDITIONS WHO MAINTAINS THAT CAMP'S WATER SHORTAGE, WHICH PRINCIPALLY AFFECTS LAO SECTION, IS NOT A NEW PROBLEM BUT AN OLD ONE WHICH HAS DEFIED SOLUTION PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF BUREAUCRATIC INERTIA ON PART OF UNHCR AND MOI. HE BELIEVES THAT UNHCR, IN PARTICULAR, COULD BE MORE VIGOROUS IN PURSUING IMPROVEMENTS IN CAMP CONDITIONS. FINNEY

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